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LE PARDON A KERGOAT
By Jules Breton
In Metropolitan Museum, New York

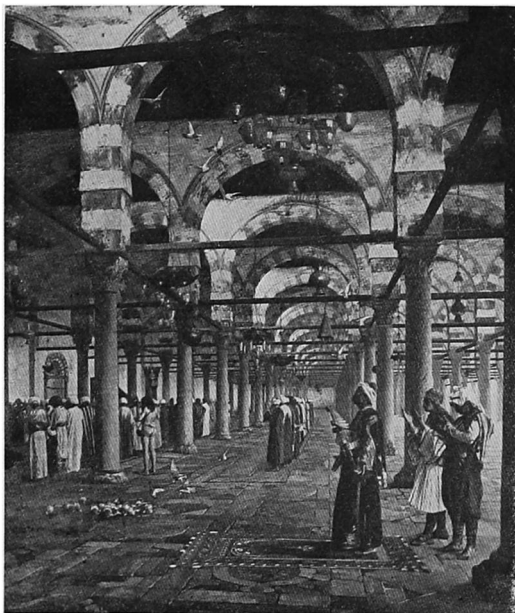
THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

With the return of Sir Purdon Clarke to undertake the active directorship of the Metropolitan Museum, New York, it is interesting to note that the capacity of the institution is to be greatly enlarged by the addition of a north wing to the portion of the present building fronting on Fifth Avenue. Owing to the accumulation of material for which there is no space in the existing exhibition rooms, the need for this addition is urgent, and as soon as it is completed, two years hence, say the Museum authorities, it will be filled, and the erection of the south wing will then become necessary.

With the completion of these two wings the Museum will have a frontage on Fifth Avenue extending from Eightieth to Eighty-fifth Street—over 1,000 feet. The Museum buildings will then form a little over a fourth part of the proposed edifice. According to the plans made by the architect, the late Richard M. Hunt, the completed Museum will cover eight acres of ground, the buildings to form a hollow square, with the old structures inclosed in a grand court. The estimate of the total cost is \$22,000,000. Mr. Hunt's plans were not made in detail and are being carried out only in a general way by subsequent architects, to whom the building of the different wings is awarded by the city, these awards being decided by competition. The architects who have the contract to put up the new wing

are thus the sixth firm engaged in elaborating the designs for the Museum. The wing that they will build has a length of about 350 feet, costing \$1,250,000.

In comparing the Metropolitan Museum of Art in its completed form with the famous museums of Europe, one notes some interesting facts. Almost all European museums are made from old palaces, and therefore are not well arranged for exhibiting purposes. In the Louvre, for instance,



PRAYER IN A MOSQUE
By Jean Léon Gerome
In Metropolitan Museum, New York

some of the paintings are splendidly lighted, while all of the statuary is miserably placed in dark rooms and corridors. This same condition prevails in the Vatican, another old palace, which was never designed for exhibition purposes. In fact, throughout France and Italy these conditions are pretty generally found—a rule that is not true of either the British or the South Kensington Museum in England. In the erection of the Metropolitan Museum it is almost superfluous to say, the chief attention has been paid by the architects to give

to the public a building that will in every respect be suitable for exhibition purposes—the most perfect museum building that can be designed.

As the efficiency and value of the Museum increases, it is believed magnificent donations, like the recent Rogers bequest, will become more frequent, the city's millionaire class will become more deeply interested, so that New York at no distant day will be able to number among its possessions one of the greatest art museums in the world. Judging by the rapidity of the growth of its treasures in the past, such an achievement is not difficult to imagine. It was only thirty-five years ago that the Museum was started, in the smallest kind of way. Two years afterward the Museum, greatly en-



OAKS IN WINTER
By Walter L. Palmer
(Shown at Exhibition of Academy of Design)



larged, was moved to the Cruger mansion in West Fourteenth Street, where it remained seven years, when it was moved to the first building erected on its present site in Central Park.

Since that time the Museum has been the recipient of numerous gifts, some of them of great value, such as the bequest of Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, who left her entire collection of oil-paintings and water-colors accompanied by an endowment of \$200,000. This was followed by the munificent gift of the Museum's president, Henry G. Marquand, who added to the collections a large number of pictures, embracing fifty-three oil paintings by old masters, as well as some specimens of the English school. The last gift of importance occurred four years ago, when Jacob S. Rogers bequeathed to the institution his whole fortune, amounting to several millions of dollars, a bequest that enables the Museum to make regular and valuable additions to its collections. The real nucleus of the Museum, and what will ever be one of its greatest treasures, is found in the Cesnola Collection. Comparatively few Americans know the scientific and artistic value of the latter, about which a curator of a European museum acknowledges that he has had to come all the way to New York twice to study it.

Alexander Stuart Murray, the authority of the nineteenth century on Greek art, did not seek to hide his astonishment at the "utter ignorance betrayed by American students of the treasures they have at home in the Central Park." He wondered that they should rush across to London and Berlin, while yet unacquainted with one of the very finest collections in existence, under their very noses at home. No European student of Greek art is unacquainted with the Cesnola Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. Layard, the discover of Nineveh, in writing of this feature of our Museum, declares that it is superior in importance and in the nature of objects to the discoveries made by Schliemann in the Troad, while the conclusions of many other distinguished scholars from all parts of the world concerning the Cesnola Collection may be summarized as follows:

"The Cesnola Collection contributes to modern knowledge a wider field of art and a greater amount of important material than has ever before been accomplished by any discovery. It forms the most complete illustration of the history of ancient art and civilization, revolutionizing many of the theories of art. It contains the first known works of Phœnician art and introduces the Phœnicians as teachers of the Etruscans. It is the key to the origin and development of Greek civilization, illustrating the international encounter of races and arts in Cyprus, and the manner in which the civilization, religion, and art of the East were transmitted to and adopted by the Greeks. Thus this collection determines the place of Greece in the history of art."

This important collection was made by Gen. di Cesnola, by some called the "founder of the Museum," its director until his death last November, while he was American consul at Cyprus forty years ago. It consists of 35,573 pieces,—vases, statues, busts, sarcophagi, coins, lamps etc.,—all

of which were excavated from the sites of ancient Cyprian cities under the direction of Cesnola, and forming one of the first of the Metropolitan



AURORA
By Will H. Low
In Metropolitan Museum, New York

Museum purchases. Owing to the laws prohibiting the exportation of art antiquities from European countries since the above collection was made, it seems unlikely that such a comprehensive addition to the archæological

treasures of an American museum will be possible for a long time to come. Thus the Metropolitan was exceedingly fortunate in acquiring it when it did.

"Notwithstanding the inestimable value of this Cyprian collection," said Mr. Story, who has been at the head of the institution pending Sir Purdon Clarke's return, "together with the various other objects of prime value included in the Museum's exhibits, it is in its paintings that the public has shown the greatest interest. The Metropolitan contains examples of nearly all the leading and world-famed schools of paintings, from Jan Van Eyck (1390-1440) to the latest and most interesting of the moderns, numbering in all 838 canvases, inclusive of the Vanderbilt loan exhibition.

"Genuine old masters are hard to find in these days. It was not so many decades ago that they were common enough in the shops of the art dealers of Rome. But now Italy guards jealously whatever it has of these priceless treasures, so that they are far harder to get than formerly. Nevertheless, in the galleries of the Metropolitan there are a sufficient number of such paintings to furnish the student with what he needs in specimens of this early and ever-glorious period of art. The old masters that we have here, however, have been reproduced so invariably as the leading features of the Museum's collections of paintings, that the public is apt to conclude that the latter is poor in examples of the great modern schools. This is misleading, as well as unfortunate, since, in an art institution of this character, aiming to give the best in art, irrespective of schools or historical periods, the real achievements of the last century in paintings are given an honored place. Thus it might be more to the purpose, in describing the contents of the Museum, to select specimens of our great modern painters—Turner, Troyon, Couture, Boucher—whose works are of inestimable value to the student, and have attained an importance among collectors that, in numerous instances, has given rise to almost fabulous prices being attached to them. A Museum like the Metropolitan is, in its best sense, an art school, and there can be no fitter encouragement and inspiration to the art student than to put before him the work not only of the early masters, but the masters of his own era as well."

An actual art school has not as yet been attempted by the Metropolitan Museum. Something in that direction exists in the occasional lectures on art that are given by professors from Columbia University. The plans for the new wing also include, besides additional exhibition-rooms, a large lecture-hall which, with the well-known educational tendencies of the new director, Sir Purdon Clarke, will doubtless inaugurate a more complete development of this important feature of the institution than has been possible in the past.

As an opening of this new era upon which the Museum is now entering, it is probable that shortly the Bramantino Panels, recently purchased by him in London, will be put on exhibition. These panels consist of twelve oil-paintings on wood by Bramantino, one of the early Italian painters of the time of Raphael. Just before leaving England, Sir Purdon also purchased

for the Museum two small panel paintings of saints by Crevelli, costing \$10,000, which will be shipped to America shortly. He also brings with him several fine plaster reproductions and a collection of antique furniture and wood-carving, including an old German cabinet, and some French armor, and various examples of Chippendale work.

Prior to Sir Purdon Clarke's departure from England, arrangements were made by him with Ambassador Reid to act as chairman of the purchasing committee for the Museum, which probably will be formed in London, and will make important additions from time to time to the Museum's art treasures. Besides these immediate additions to the Museum that will either be put on exhibition now or when the new wing is opened, there is a collection of 8,000 Greek and Roman coins, and an extremely valuable collection of tapestries and laces awaiting a place in the exhibition-rooms. The bronze statue of the Emperor Trebonius Gallus, also, about which there was so much amusing controversy recently, has not yet been assigned to a niche among the other exhibits of sculpture.

Then there are the "Giustiniani Marbles," whose fate has not yet been determined—and, according to some museum authorities, will never be permitted to make their bow to the public under the auspices of this Museum. These marbles originally came from an old Roman palace, and were offered for sale to the Metropolitan Museum about two years ago, but declined. They were afterward purchased by Mrs. Frederic Thomson, and presented by her to the Museum. These consist of twenty heroic figures about whose antiquity there is no question, but upon whose pretensions to artistic beauty much doubt has been cast. Advocates of these statues claim for them a high degree of classic excellence and antique interest—in fact, say that they will rank next to the Cesnola Collection in importance, but with this view the majority of the trustees do not as yet appear to coincide.

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